REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed December 20, 2002 in connection with the above identified patent application.

Status of claims

The present communication amends claims 1, 2, 10 and 16 and adds new claim 18.

Amended claim 1 is a combination of original claims 1 and 7. Claim 10 has been made dependent on claim 1 only. Claim 16 recites the provision of a support element (7) of elongated conformation as clarified at page 7, last two lines, page 8, first three lines. Claim 18 is a combination of original claims 1 and 11 plus some other technical features, i.e. a support element of elongated conformation, small areas (11b) of the attachment seats (11) having same shape and identical dimensions and attachment seats (11) for engaging a projection (9) each.

The added features are described from page 7, line 22 to page 8, line 3, at page 9, lines 12-19 and in the drawings as filed. No new matter has been added.

CLAIM REJECTIONS 35 USC 112

Claim 2 was rejected under 35USC112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distincly claim the subject matter of the invention.

In order to overcome the above rejection, it has been specified that the wording Ano means being associated@ is to be intended as no other attachment means.

DOUBLE PATENTING

As per the double patenting rejection, a terminal disclaimer, attached, has been filed by the applicant.

CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35USC 102 (b) - 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-15, 17 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Meyer (US 4011635).

Claims 1, 5 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Molnar (US 4386799).

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Meyer (US 4011635).

Allowability of claims 1-6, 8-15

Applicant has amended claim 1 to include all of the limitations of claim 7. Claim 7 was considered allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable over Meyer and Molnar and the rejection to claim 1 should be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2-6, 8-15, depending on an allowable claim 1 are also allowable. The rejection to these claims should be withdrawn.

Allowability of Claim 16

Amended method claim 16 is allowable. Amended claim 16 discloses technical steps not described or suggested by any of the prior art even in combination. In the present claim 16, however, it is clearly stated that after manufacturing a support element having an extension substantially corresponding to the longitudinal development of the main section bar (in Meyer there is no disclosure of such an elongated piece and therefore no disclosure of a manufacturing of such a piece) the support element is inserted by sliding in the main section bar BEFORE associating the moulding elements parts to the studs of the car bodies. In other words according to the present invention it is possible to fully assemble the moulding element

BEFORE starting the engaging to the car body.

Meyer's assembling method is shown in fig 2 and 3. Each of the various support elements 38 must be correctly engaged to the respective stud 12, then the section bar 28 is placed on the support elements by sliding.

Further, Meyer teaches to first assemble the various supporting elements to the car body and AFTER to slide the main section bar on the supporting elements. Moreover no disclosure of a step of axially fastening the main section bar to the support element can be seen in the prior art. In view of the above it is felt that also claim 16 is allowable.

Allowability of New Claim 18 Over Cited Art

Claim 18 discloses a continuous support element of elongated conformation. Meyer, however, does not disclose a continuous support element of elongated conformation. In Meyer, fig. 2, at least two short support elements 38 can be seen; such elements 38 clearly do not extend over the entire longitudinal length of the main section bar 28.

Additionally, claim 18's elongated support element presents a plurality of attachment seats each having a larger area and a smaller area. The claimed small areas of the attachment seats have the same shape and the same dimensions. The use of an elongated support element allows placement of all the attachment seats in their proper relative position after insertion by sliding of the support element in the main section bar. In this way each attachment seat is placed at a pre-set distance so as to each engage a single stud.

Meyer does not disclose these features. Meyer discloses the use of two larger seats (48, 49) and of two smaller areas (46 and the one on the left of seat 49). The smaller areas have different dimensions and different shapes (see Meyer fig.3). Indeed Meyer teaches to

insert the button head 20 of the stud 12 through the circular opening 48. The slotted opening 46 of Meyer has a slightly larger width than the diameter of the shank 18 but it is smaller than the diameter of the head 20 of the stud 12. Meyer's relief portion 49, 50 is formed to provide for slight lateral movement of the clip 38 when mounted on the stud as shown in Meyer fig. 1 and 2. The support element 38 shown by Meyer has to be engaged to the stud 12 and the stud head to be placed in correspondence with the relief portion 49, 50 so as to maintain some relative movement capabilities between the stud 12 and the support element 38.

During the insertion of the main section bar 28 the relative movements are used to enable the sliding of the main section bar 28. Meyer substantially blocks in its position the support element 38 with respect to the stud 12. In fact a tab 75 exists to provide a restriction in the opening of lesser dimension than the diameter of the shank 18 of the stud 12 (see Meyer col. 3, lines 47-50). Once the Meyer stud is correctly placed, it must remain in its position and therefore it must not again slide in the slotted opening 46 and nor slide in the opposite direction. In view of the above, the Meyer slotted openings, without reference numbers, shown in fig. 3 of Meyer patent, must be different (and in particular smaller) at least in width with respect to the slot 46.

Meyer's two small areas for the attachments seats are shown to be different, (see fig. 1, 2, 3). They necessarily must be different in shape and dimensions since slot 46 has to allow passage of shank 18 while the other slot must prevent such a passage.

The skilled person would not think of modifying the Meyer slots in order to be identical in shape since the Meyer moulding element would not work as above explained. The teachings of claim 18 are not suggested alone or in combination in any of the prior art. In view of the

above it is felt that new claim 18 is allowable over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

The prior art made of record but not applied by the Examiner has been carefully considered but it is not felt to make obvious or anticipate the claims.

All matters having been addressed above and in view of the pending claims and remarks applicant respectfully requests the entry of these amendments, the Examiner's reconsideration of the application and timely allowance of pending claims.

Applicant's counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the claims

Claims 1, 2, 10, 16 have been amended as follows:

1. (Once amended) Moulding element for motor vehicle bodies comprising:

- a main section bar (2) of elongated conformation;

- attachment means (6) operatively associated to the main section bar (2) and destined to engage a corresponding securing area (5a) of a body (5) of a motor vehicle,said attachment means (6) including:

-a continuous support support element (7) engaged to the main section bar (2), said support element (7) presenting a pre-set number of attachment seats (11) located at a pre-set mutual distance suitable for engagement with the corresponding projections carried by said securing area (5a); [and]

- a longitudinal seat (8) [obtained] on the main section bar (2) for receiving said continuous support element (7), the longitudinal seat (8) presenting in cross-section a longitudinal opening (10) to allow access to said attachment seats (11) and undercuts (12) acting in opposition on the corresponding bearing portion (13) of the continuous support element (7) [characterized in that], wherein

said undercuts (12) of the main section bar (2) are capable of preventing extraction of the attachment means (6) through the longitudinal opening, said main section bar (2) and said continuous support element (7) not being made in resilient material; and

- a flexible seal lip (4) extending longitudinally along substantially the entire development of the moulding element itself and presenting a base portion (4a) engaged on the main section bar.

2. (Once amended) Moulding element according to claim 1, characterized in that:

said longitudinal seat (8) is substantially corresponding to said continuous support element (7), the continuous support element (7) being inserted in the corresponding longitudinal seat (8); and in that

in a first operative condition of the moulding element (1), where the continuous support element (7) is separated from the body (5), the continuous support element (7) is exclusively and directly engaged only the main section bar (2) and, in the second operative condition of the moulding element (1) where the moulding element (1) is fully assembled and mounted on the body (5), the continuous support element is directly and exclusively attached to the main section bar (2) and to the projections (9) carried by said securing area (5a); and in that

no other attachment means are associated to the continuous support element (7) for directly attaching the same to the body (5).

10. (Once amended) Moulding element according to [anyone of the previous claims] claim 1, characterized in that the the continuous support element (7) presents a pre-set number of attachment seats (11) delimited at least in one side of the continuous element (7) destined to face the body, by a peripheral lip defining a closed line.

16. (Twice amended) Method for the manufacturing of the moulding element and for assembling the same to a motor vehicle body comprising the following phases:

- realizing a main section bar (2) of elongated conformation and provided with a longitudinal seat (8);

- realizing a continuous support element (7) of elongated conformation extending substantially over an entire longitudinal development of the main section bar (2) and presenting a pre-set number of attachment seats (11) positioned at a pre-set mutual distance;

- engaging the continuous support element (7) to the main section bar (2) prior to associating the moulding element (1) to the body (5) of a motor vehicle; and

- axially fastening the main section bar (2) and the support element (7) prior to associating the moulding element (1) to the body (5) of a motor vehicle,

- said engaging phase of the continuous support element (7) to the main section bar (2) being realized by sliding the continuous support element (7) through the longitudinal seat (8).

New claim 18 has been added as follows:

18. Moulding element for motocar bodies comprising:

- a main section bar (2) of elongated comformation;

- attachment means (6) operatively associated with the main section bar (2) and destined to engage corresponding securing area (5a) of the body (5) of a motor vehicle, said attachment means (6) including:

- a continuos support element (7) extending substantially over an entire longitudinal development of the main section bar (2) and engaged to the main section bar (2), said support element (7) presenting a plurality of attachment seats (11) delimited at least in one side of the continuos support element (7) destined to face the body (5) by a peripheral lip, the peripheral lip delimiting for each attachment seats (11) at least a large area (11a) for the insertion of a fastening projection (9) and at least a small area (11b) for blocking the fastening projection (9) in an axial direction of motion of the moulding element away from the body, the small areas (11b) of the attachment seats (11) having same shape and identical dimensions, said attachment seats (11) being located at a pre-set mutual distance for engaging a projection (9) each, and;

- a longitudinal seat (8) on the main section bar (2) for receiving said continuous support element (7), the longitudinal seat (8) presenting in cross-section a longitudinal opening (10) to allow access to said attachment seats (11) and undercuts (12) acting in opposition on a corresponding bearing portion (13) of the coninuous support element (7).